

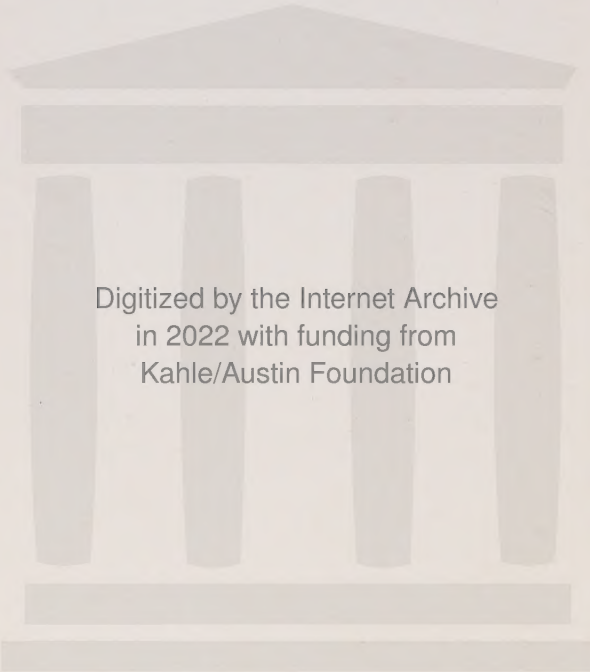
The Romance of Leprosy

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E. MACKERCHAR, L.L.A.

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The Romance of Leprosy

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BY

E. MACKERCHAR, L.L.A.



THE MISSION TO LEPERS

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FOREWORD

THE study of the origin and spread of leprosy from earliest times has afforded a wide field for medical research; its romance has inspired author, preacher, artist, and poet with some of their greatest themes.

Suggestive names by which the scourge was commonly known show how it was regarded in olden days: "The Mickle Ail" (Scotland); "La Grande Maladie" (France); "The Great Disease" (India); "Hinin," outside of humanity (Japan); "The Stroke" (Palestine). In certain parts of Africa the term "Lazarus" recalls the leper beggar of New Testament days who lay at the gate of the rich man, "full of sores." In many lands, superstition, horror, and loathing still mark its presence, and cruelty is meted out to countless numbers who, through no fault of their own, have contracted the oldest and most terrible of all diseases. The Homes for their reception may be regarded as "sanctuaries of sorrow," "storehouses of misery," "scrap-heaps for the physical wrecks of humanity," or as "Heaven," the name literally given by contented inmates to a Christian leper home in Korea.

This review touches on (1) Leprosy in Bible days; (2) An Historical Sketch; (3) The Disease in Literature, Poetry, and Art; (4) Heroes and Heroines; (5) Medical Treatment; (6) The Future Outlook. Within the space available it is impossible to deal adequately with a subject of such importance and fascination, and the brief sketches are merely an introduction to more intensive study by interested readers.

Leprosy in Bible Days

STUDENTS of biblical history must be impressed by the wonderful health record of early days.

Generations come and go ; the passing of heads of families is consecutively given in long lists in the Book of Genesis but in no case is any ailment mentioned, and it would seem that old age, with gradual weakening of physical powers, rather than specific disease accounted for death in the great majority of cases. The first mention of illness (its nature not stated) is the simple message brought to Joseph, " Thy father is sick " (Gen. xlviii. 1).

Leprosy, the oldest disease known to mankind, is introduced, though not mentioned by name, in the story of Job (1520 B.C.). Compelled to leave his loved and lovely home, this sufferer sought refuge among the dust-heaps on the outskirts of the city, and there the loathsome malady progressed until the cry burst from his lips, " Oh that I might have my request, and that God would grant me the thing that I long for, even that it would please God to destroy me . . . and cut me off " (Job vi. 8, 9).

Far harder to bear than physical suffering are the ostracism and loneliness of the leper's lot. Deserted by his oldest and most intimate friends whom he described as " miserable comforters " (Job xvi. 2), Job yearned for sympathy and companionship : " Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me " (Job xix. 21). Yet in his darkest days this sufferer's faith in God

remained unshaken, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (Job xiii. 15).

Renewal of health and strength, return to home and family, prosperity far beyond anything enjoyed in his former life, and the assurance that God's blessing continued to rest upon him, crowned the closing years of this patriarch (Job xlii. 12 to 17), whose story has been described by Carlyle as "one of the grandest things that has ever been written by pen."

Leprosy is first mentioned by name on the occasion when God granted the three signs to Moses, by means of which he was to convince Pharaoh of his divine commission to be leader of the Israelites to the Promised Land. The second sign was that of the leprous hand (Exodus iv. 6, 7). Though familiar with the disease through long residence in Egypt and Arabia, Moses was overwhelmed when for a few brief moments he was personally stricken, and his profound relief when he "plucked" the affected hand out of his bosom and saw that it was again restored can be sensed by the youngest reader of this incident.

During their sojourn in Egypt, where the scourge was known from earliest times, the Israelites appear to have been divinely protected, for at the time of the Exodus it is recorded that there was not "one feeble person" among them (Psalm cv. 37). The great host, however, went forth accompanied by a "mixed multitude" (Exodus xii. 38), and it is probable that from this source leprosy was transmitted to the healthy pilgrims. In any case it must have made its appearance in the Israelitish section early in the desert wanderings, and later it assumed such proportions that in the laws for their health and well-being given by God to Moses (Lev. xiii. and xiv.) more space was allotted to those

concerned with this disease than to any other individual subject, covering the malady in persons, clothing, and houses. These laws were to be observed after the wilderness journeys were ended and the Israelites had settled in the land of Canaan. If leprosy made its appearance in any dwelling and its progress could not be arrested, the building was to be razed to the ground, its timber, stones, and mortar carried outside the city to an "unclean" place, and its owner or anyone entering it was to remain unclean until all regulations were complied with (Lev. xiv. 34 to 57).

The purity of the Tabernacle service was strictly safeguarded by the provision that any priest contracting leprosy was forbidden to pursue his sacred vocation (Lev. xxii. 4).

Leper laws were applicable to women as well as to men (Num. v. 3), but one leper woman only is mentioned by name in the Bible (Num. xii. 10)—Miriam, the beautiful and gifted sister of Moses and Aaron, whose punishment for the sin of treason fell not only on herself but on the whole camp, which had to stay its journeyings until in answer to the prayer of Moses, composed of only one sentence, but each word fraught with passionate pleading, "Heal her now, O God, I beseech Thee" (Num. xii. 13), she was restored to health. To the end of his life Moses was haunted by this incident, and one of his last solemn injunctions and warnings to his people was to "take heed in the plague of leprosy," and to remember what God had done to Miriam (Deut. xxiv. 8, 9).

One of the many dark passages in Israel's history during the reign of David was the murder of Abner by Joab (2 Samuel iii. 27). In repudiating all responsibility for the crime, King David foretold that punish-

ment for it should fall not only on the murderer but on his posterity, and that among other ills there should never fail to be a leper in the family of Joab (2 Samuel iii. 28, 29).

The story of Naaman, captain of the Syrian host, a "mighty" man but a leper, is found in the book of 2 Kings, chapter v. The discovery that that brave soldier had contracted leprosy plunged his household into mourning, but no idea of isolating the beloved master seems to have been entertained. On the heart of no one did the burden press more heavily than on that of the little slave girl, and her prayers for her master's relief were followed by practical effort as she timidly suggested to her mistress that the prophet of her God could heal the dread disease. The record of how the sufferer clutched at this straw of hope, his visit to Elisha and his cleansing (the sole cure among the many victims of his day and country), forms one of the most fascinating stories of Old Testament literature. For Naaman all went well, but on the prophet's side the incident had a tragic ending. Elisha's trusted servant Gehazi had been an interested spectator of the scene, and his master's refusal of reward was beyond his comprehension; why should he not turn the occasion to his own advantage and enrich himself? Straightway he pressed after the little Syrian company, ostensibly to solicit gifts for his master, but intending to divert them for his own use. All appeared to go well; his request was instantly and generously complied with, the spoil was carefully concealed, and Gehazi returned to discharge his customary duties as if nothing had happened. His master's simple but searching inquiry as to where he had been, met with the apparently innocent reply that he had been nowhere.

No punishment could be too drastic for such deceit, and with the sentence ringing in his ears that he and his seed should bear the disease of Naaman for all time, the old and valued retainer passed out from the presence of his master, "a leper as white as snow" (2 Kings v. 27). Even this calamity did not crush the indomitable spirit of Gehazi. Years later we read of him in the royal court recounting, at the special request of King Ben-hadad, some of the wonderful miracles wrought by Elisha (2 Kings viii. 4 to 6). Even as he was telling of the restoration to life of the Shunammite boy, the widow and her son arrived to plead for restitution of their old home and property. Gehazi's recognition of them and his confirmation of their identity immediately led to the request being granted far beyond their expectations.

The siege of Samaria by Ben-hadad furnishes an interesting leper reference (2 Kings vi, vii). Within the city famine had reduced the inhabitants to the state of cannibalism and destruction seemed imminent. At its gate four starving lepers discussed their grim outlook. To remain where they were or to enter the city meant certain death. Their only hope, and it might have a similar issue, was to venture into the Syrian camp under the cover of darkness to pick up some crumbs to appease their hunger. While these outcasts were making their decision outside, Elisha was making a strange pronouncement within the city walls, forecasting the promise of God that by another day the siege would be raised and abundance of food provided. No wonder that as they looked around those to whom he spoke were unable to credit his statement. That the message entrusted to him was to have its fulfilment at the hands of the lepers would

have been beyond the prophet's own belief ; but within a few hours the visit of these men to the deserted Syrian camp and their return to the city with the amazing news of the rich provision which lay open to the city's grasp proclaimed them, indeed at the eleventh hour, the saviours of their town and its citizens. It is not unlikely that the king would wish to recompense these public benefactors, of whom tradition has it that Gehazi was one. This might account for his presence at Court and his direct contact with Ben-hadad.

The last reference to leprosy in the Old Testament is in the story of the boy king Azariah or Uzziah who ascended the throne of Judah at the age of sixteen years. As long as he had good counsellors and followed their advice things went well, but ambition wrongly directed led him ever onwards until he sought to usurp the sacred office of the priesthood. Even as he dared to take the censer into his hand, his doom was sealed by the disease appearing on his forehead, and the startled priests hastened to expedite the flight of their stricken king from the temple courts. For the remainder of his life Uzziah was compelled to dwell in a "separate" house, but at death he was accorded royal burial, being laid in the tomb of his fathers (2 Chron. xxvi).

In the New Testament era leprosy was widely prevalent and greatly dreaded, its victims as in earlier days being homeless outcasts. Lazarus, full of sores, lay at the gate of the rich man, hoping to be fed with the crumbs which fell from his table (Luke xvi. 20, 21); solitary victims or small companies roamed the hill-sides or sought alms outside the villages and towns of Palestine. These sufferers had a very special place in the care and affection of the Master. Descending the Mount after the greatest sermon ever preached, and

followed by the multitude which had hung upon his words, Jesus came face to face with a man described by St Luke as "full of leprosy," so far advanced it may have been, so crippled and helpless, that unable to climb the hill, he patiently awaited the return of the great Prophet. His appearance filled the heart of Jesus with infinite compassion and the agonised cry, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean," brought the immediate response, "I will, be thou clean." Even as the words were spoken, and the gentle, healing hand was laid upon him, health and strength returned to the suppliant who used these God-given gifts to blaze abroad the miraculous power of his preserver (Mark i. 40 to 45).

What was probably a typical incident is next mentioned. Outside a village stood ten leper men for whom there was neither place nor part in the world's work or fellowship. Hearing that the new and miracle-working prophet was to pass a certain spot they awaited his coming and as Jesus drew near their raucous cry rang out, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" In this instance no healing hand was stretched forth, but what must have seemed a strange command was given, "Go, show yourselves unto the priests." There was no disputing of the order, however; with one accord the lepers wheeled round and as they obeyed their prayer was answered, yet only one returned to pour out his gratitude to his deliverer. How searching was Christ's summing up of the incident: "Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?" (Luke xvii. 12 to 19).

While the fame of Jesus spread far and wide, his forerunner John the Baptist lay languishing in prison. There, in misery and loneliness, the remembrance of

earlier days—the great gatherings which had thronged to hear and to be baptized by him, and most memorable of all, the day when Jesus had asked for baptism at his hands—was intermingled with doubts as to whether the promised Messiah, whose coming he had so often heralded, had really made his appearance on earth. Into the prison cell news of the wonderful works of Christ was constantly being carried, so, determined to end his misgivings, John commissioned two of his disciples to approach the new Prophet with the direct inquiry, “Art thou He that should come, or do we look for another?” Pushing through the crowd which surrounded the Master the messengers presented their question. For a brief space no answer was given, and while this was anxiously awaited they eagerly watched as all kinds of sickness and disease were cured. Then turning to the two disciples Christ told them to go back and to tell John something of the wonders which they had personally seen, how even lepers were cleansed, surely sufficient assurance that the miracle worker was indeed the long-looked-for Messiah (Matt. xi. 2 to 6).

One of Christ's last retreats on earth was the home of Simon, a leper. No particulars as to this man's social standing or family are given; in all likelihood he was just one of the great number of unknown sufferers coming under the Master's healing touch, and to show his gratitude to his benefactor he offered him the hospitality of his home. Many present must have had occasion to bless Jesus for personal benefit; one, a poor woman, endeavoured to express something of her love and gratitude by sacrificing her most precious possession for her Master's use. What seemed reckless extravagance to some of the company was not so regarded by Christ whose commendation,

“Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her,” was assurance that the sacrificial deed was not in vain (Mark xiv. 9).

In sending forth his disciples, Jesus gave them power to heal all kinds of diseases, the lepers whose terrible and incurable malady might easily have made them to be overlooked, being specially commended to their care (Matt. x. 8). Nearly two thousand years have passed, but this command was never more obligatory and never more widely nor more sympathetically obeyed than at the present day.

An Historical Sketch

IT is generally acknowledged that the original home of leprosy was in Asia. That continent still claims a very large proportion of the world's leper population, and in following the world-wide progress of the disease down the ages Arabia may, for several reasons, be taken as a starting-point. At Uz, in the north-west of that land, the first description of leprosy (though unnamed) is found in the Old Testament story of Job ; at Mount Sinai in the south, the leper laws were given by God to Moses ; the disease made its appearance among the Israelites in the Arabian desert, and there Miriam was stricken with the scourge.

In ancient history Arabia was a land of outstanding importance, for through it there passed several of the great caravan routes along which the trade of the world was carried. Caravans were often made up of strangely mixed companies banded together for safety from robber hordes, and must often have included lepers, for they were the greatest travellers of all. The leper, wherever he went, was a menace to the health of the community—whether seeking rest and refreshment at a desert oasis, drawing water from wells used by healthy travellers, sleeping in caves or shelters occupied by other wanderers, or finding refuge in the poorest and most crowded quarter of a village or town in which diseases of all kinds were already rampant. Markets, fairs, and religious festivals were happy hunting-grounds for beggars, especially for lepers,

the sight of whose deformities and disfigurements sufficed to arouse sympathy in all compassionate hearts.

A favourite resort was the "holy" city of Mecca to which thousands upon thousands of Mohammedan pilgrims annually flocked to worship at the birthplace of their prophet. At other centres on such occasions, the hope of gaining "merit" was always an incentive to profuse liberality, but the giving of alms was obligatory at Mecca, a definite command to this end having been laid upon his followers by Mohammed. At the close of the festival the pilgrims went their several ways, the poor lepers to seek fresh begging grounds in every direction and to each of these they carried the disease.

Passing eastwards, we find that from time immemorial India was a stronghold of leprosy. In her myriad villages with their teeming population (and leprosy is a disease of the village) the conditions most favourable to its growth—poverty, dirt, insufficient food and overcrowding—were found in abundance. From the villages, those affected constantly passed out to join the great multitudes of India's leper-beggars. As a general rule the leper journeyed on foot, or even crawled from one spot to another, but if in a position to do so he made indiscriminate use of public conveyances. Long train journeys were many a time covered free of charge, for once having secured a seat (not too difficult to manage in the bustle of a crowded station) a leper might travel in comfort, his companions giving him a wide berth, and no ticket-collector being over-anxious to eject him if this had to be done by personal contact. No more certain or more fruitful method of spreading the disease could be imagined.

After long wandering, a town might be reached where a leper quarter had already been established, into which the addition of a few newcomers made little difference to the existing misery and degradation. In these centres the undesirables mixed daily with the members of the healthy community, begging in the streets or handling foodstuffs and other goods in the bazaar where they might even be found acting as salesmen. The scourge entered the palace of the Maharajah, the homes of the well-to-do, and those of the poorer classes alike, finding its victims in every caste, trade, and profession. With a leper population estimated at anything up to 1,000,000, India is to-day one of the greatest leprosy distributing centres in the world.

In China, probably infected from India, leprosy has existed for thousands of years and is most prevalent in the provinces on the southern and eastern seaboard. With the opening up of the country, however, through increased road and rail facilities, development of its great ports, constant intercourse with other lands, extension of industry with large factories drawing their workers from inland centres and in early days carried on under very unhealthy conditions, the scourge has now passed into practically every province.

An interesting feature in China is the leper village, often found outside the gates of large cities. There the meagre allowance made by the authorities is supplemented by organised begging expeditions into the town, sometimes carefully mapped out into districts for this purpose. In certain areas leper Guilds were established, appeals from their recognised representatives meeting with a ready response from the public. Shopkeepers not infrequently employed a member of

such a Guild to ingather his bad debts, payment being promptly forthcoming on the appearance of such an unwelcome collector. Of one leper village a visitor wrote, "The sum total of woe was a bit overwhelming. One man was smoking opium, a group of lepers were gambling, and another man, with no fingers, would probably have been doing this also if his son's foot had not been practically dropping off and he had had to stay at home to lend aid." In some of these breeding-grounds of the scourge, healthy folk lived and mixed indiscriminately with the lepers.

With an estimated leper population of at least 1,000,000, China has to-day been described as "one of the world's reservoirs of the disease," a reservoir which has overflowed and engulfed many another land down the centuries. An expert's conclusion—"Wherever the Chinese coolie has settled, leprosy will be found," has been abundantly proved, for from China the scourge passed to Korea, Japan, Siam, the Malay Peninsula, the Philippine Islands, and many other island groups of the Pacific Ocean, each in turn becoming a hot-bed of the disease.

In Korea the stricken were feared and hated, and treated with the utmost cruelty. In a Japanese household the presence of leprosy was regarded as an unpardonable disgrace, and every effort was made to conceal the unfortunate victim from public observation. Where this was found to be impossible, the sufferer (adult or child) shared the fate of his fellows in other lands and became a homeless outcast.

Returning to Arabia, we find that leprosy was carried northwards through Syria, westwards along the caravan routes to Palestine, Egypt, and the northern and western coasts of Africa, thence to Turkey, Greece,

Italy, and the European continent. Sea traffic from southern Arabia infected the eastern and southern areas of Africa.

“Many lepers were in Israel,” and no doubt also in Syria in the days of Naaman, on the site of whose house in Damascus a leper home was erected. In his “Innocents Abroad,” Mark Twain writes: “One cannot appreciate the horrors of the disease until he looks upon it in all its ghastliness in Naaman’s ancient dwelling in Damascus.” Many travellers refer to its presence in the Holy Land where its victims, often in far-advanced stages, still beg for “baksheesh” at some of the most frequented of the sacred spots, such as the Pool of Siloam. “Dying daily, they daily increase in misery and pain,” was Dr Norman Macleod’s description of a company of lepers on Mount Zion who crept out of their mud dens day by day to beg for their sustenance and at night wandered back again “to talk, to dream, to hope! and for what?”

In Baldwin IV of Jerusalem there is the record of a royal victim who, like Uzziah of earlier days, was forced to abdicate his throne because of his affliction.

Egypt, regarded by many as the original home of leprosy, was affected from earliest days. No mention of its presence in South Africa is found, however, until the middle of the 18th century. Once finding a footing there it spread in an alarming manner and is now met with all over the continent of Africa, which, on a comparative basis of population, has the largest incidence of leprosy in the world.

Though considered to be a disease of tropical countries, in which the largest proportion of lepers is still to be found, leprosy flourishes irrespective of

climatic conditions and finds victims in all races and classes throughout the world.

“The spread of the disease throughout Europe is easily accounted for,” writes a historian, as “wherever the Roman arms were carried, leprosy would necessarily follow.” From the 11th to the 13th century the advance and ravages of leprosy on the European continent can be traced in history, architecture, and literature from Constantinople in the east to the lonely island of St Kilda in the west, from Spain in the south to Iceland in the north. Thousands of leper homes were compulsorily erected, every large town being obliged by law to provide a refuge for its stricken citizens. Islands as well as the mainland suffered from its inroads, and off the north-east coast of Crete, even yet, a settlement is provided for the reception of lepers from all parts of Greece.

In France, 2,000 leper homes were said to be in existence in the 11th century. Some districts were so heavily infected that admission had to be confined to local sufferers or even to members of specific trades or professions because of the large percentage of victims in these callings. Admittance to the well-known St Lazare Home was restricted, with one exception, to citizens of Paris. This exception was in the case of bakers who seemed specially susceptible, and from whose ranks a large number of patients was drawn. Every master baker in Paris had to contribute one loaf per week to this home. Later, this was changed to a levy of one penny per week, known as the “St Lazarus” or “St Ladre” penny. The hospital was under royal patronage, St Louis the Gros founding on its behalf the Fair of St Ladre, which lasted for eight days and helped substantially towards its support. It

is recorded later that Louis VII visited St Lazare on the eve of his departure for the Crusades and gave generous gifts to the inmates.

In some districts of France, lepers were compulsorily evicted to wooden huts built for them at the side of the main highways. In front of each hut a pole was erected on which a wooden dish was fixed for the reception of food or alms. The stricken were forbidden to look into any well or fountain because of an old superstition that even by looking into a well, the reflection of a leper was sufficient to taint the water and thus to pass on the disease.

In the 14th century massacres of Jews and lepers took place in several districts of France on the assumption that they had combined to poison wells with the blood of lepers so that the disease might be passed on to the healthy community. The real reason for this fiendish act, however, is said to have been the determination of the French King to secure for his own purposes the revenues of some of the leper homes which had become very richly endowed.

Malmaison, the favourite residence of Napoleon Bonaparte, is believed to have derived its name from the fact that it was a home for lepers in the Middle Ages.

Norway, Iceland, and Britain were the last centres of the disease in Europe. In Norway, at one time very heavily infected, the presence of the disease was associated with the consumption of decomposed fish, fresh fish being rarely consumed. Unsold fish, left on the shore for weeks, was pickled and used for food. In this connection it is of interest to note that Bergen once possessed the largest fish market and one of the largest leper homes in the world. A beautiful hospital

there to-day, with accommodation for 300 patients, is almost empty, and as far as this disease goes, Norway is practically a cleansed land.

From Norway, leprosy passed to Iceland where its presence was looked upon with fear, and its name seldom mentioned without the pious ejaculation, "May God in His mercy save us." Two epidemics, smallpox in 1707 and measles in 1846, were responsible for wiping out the disease to a great extent, and a happy augury for the complete success of the Government's efforts to eradicate it from Iceland is found in the very small number of patients now to be provided for in the spacious and efficiently-run home at Reykjavik. Near the church door of one of the small churches lies the grave of Hall-grimir Petursson, the 16th century leper hymn-writer of Iceland, whose melodies still rank among his country's favourite hymns. His own words indicate that even in the darkest hour he was more than conqueror :—

" Whene'er the Master calleth
no man may buy him free ;
And night, where'er it falleth,
hath naught of fear for me."

In 1348-49 an appalling plague, the Black Death, swept across Europe taking a terrible toll of the population. It is significant that from this date the disease diminished, and the number of leper homes steadily decreased. With the exception of the British Isles, leprosy had practically died out of Europe by the 15th century.

From the Continent, the disease entered the British Isles ; England, Scotland, and Ireland becoming in turn infected. In England the scourge became a

“national malady,” and in all parts provision was made for the reception and relief of those stricken. The eastern counties were more heavily stricken than those in the west. Norfolk had many lazarettos, six of which were in the capital city of Norwich. Two London homes were of special interest, St Giles-in-the-Fields, the largest and best-known, generously supported by Matilda, wife of Henry I and daughter of Queen Margaret of Scotland, whose piety and kindly help to all needy ones, including lepers, earned for her the title of “Good Queen Margaret.” The other home, St James’s, surrounded by a marsh, occupied the site on which St James’s Palace now stands. The Stourbridge home, near Cambridge, attained world-wide prominence through the great annual fair granted by King John to aid its revenue. At the beginning of September in each year a town of booths and tents suddenly sprang into existence, and traders from all parts of Britain and the Continent displayed beautiful and valuable goods for sale. Venetian and Genoese merchants brought silks and velvets ; Flemish merchants, their linens ; the Spanish, iron ; the Norwegian, tar and pitch ; and the Gascon, his wines. The fair was opened in state by the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University, accompanied by the Mayor of the town. John Bunyan is said to have drawn inspiration for the description of “Vanity Fair” in “The Pilgrim’s Progress” from Stourbridge fair, with the busy scenes of which he was doubtless familiar.

By royal permission the inmates of the Shrewsbury home were granted the right of taking a handful of corn or flour from all sacks exposed for sale in the Shrewsbury market.

Leprosy was long prevalent in Wales, where it

was known as the "Separation Sickness." Entering Scotland from England at the border counties, the disease may be followed from east to west, and from south to north as far as the Shetland Islands, where till near the close of the 18th century it lingered long after its eradication from other parts of the British Isles.

The presence of the scourge in Ireland can be traced from very early days, one authority going back as far as A.D. 432. By the end of the 17th century the disease had run its course and Ireland was considered a "freed" land.

Leprosy was carried to the New World by emigrants and explorers from Norway, France, and Spain. In Canada it made its appearance in the 17th century in the French settlements bordering the Gulf of St Lawrence. There has never been any serious advance of the scourge in Canada, and the home at Tracadie in New Brunswick has sufficed for the shelter of Canada's victims.

In the United States, Central and South America, Spaniards and Portuguese settlers and slaves from Africa were the carriers of the bacillus. In the States, as in Canada, leprosy has been kept in check by the vigilance of the health authorities, and the well-known and up-to-date home at Carville, Louisiana, makes adequate provision for needy sufferers.

South America is very heavily infected, the progress of the disease in many provinces presenting a problem of great magnitude for the authorities. Legislation makes the scourge compulsorily notifiable, but this is not rigidly enforced. Highly infective cases wander at will; and on the country roads, in railway stations, and in the busy streets of large towns lepers mingling with

the healthy community are a constant source of danger in its midst.

In Australia, the last continent to be touched upon, leprosy did not make its appearance until the middle of the 19th century, being introduced by Chinese immigrants attracted to Australia by the discovery of gold and the development of the cotton and sugar industries. With the dispersal of these workers all over the continent, each province in time reported infection, mainly among the Chinese. Notification of the disease is compulsory, and it has never grown to be a serious problem in Australia. Accommodation for white as well as coloured patients is provided at the lazaretto on Peel Island, near Brisbane.

Leprosy in Literature and Art

ALL down the ages the disease of leprosy has fascinated writer, artist, and poet, providing each in turn with themes upon which to exercise the loftiest imagination and the highest artistic skill.

In Biblical literature there are no stories more graphic than those of the outcast leper ; in secular writings the uttermost depths of human misery are never more realistically depicted than in a reference to this, the oldest and most terrible of all diseases.

For a survey of leprosy in early days, the chapter entitled "The Mickle Ail," in Mackenzie's "History of Scotland," is descriptive of conditions in the writer's own land and the manner in which the leper was generally regarded and treated there. "A little Scottish World," (Rev. Kirkwood Hewat, M.A., F.S.A. Scot.), describes leper life at Prestwick Home in Ayrshire, founded by King Robert the Bruce, himself a victim of the disease. Xavier de Maistre in his simple and pathetic tale, "The Leper of the City of Aosta," gives the story of a leper brother and sister interned in an isolated tower on the outskirts of that Italian city. After the sister's death, life became almost unendurable for the brother whose remark to de Maistre, a rare and welcome visitor, "God preserve you from ever being obliged to live alone," revealed something of the horror of an existence which has been well described as a "living death." Vivid accounts of visits paid to leper settlements in Siberia, where sufferers lived in appalling neglect and misery, are given

in Miss Kate Marsden's book, "On Sledge and Horseback to Outcast Siberian Lepers." Memories of over thirty years' intercourse with the inmates of Robben Island colony (off Cape Town) are recalled by James W. Fish in "Robben Island, the Home of the Leper." The "Autobiography of John E. Davis, M.A." (a Canadian Baptist missionary to the Telugus of South India), one of the most pathetic autobiographies ever penned, reveals courage and endurance almost unequalled on the part of the writer who had fallen victim to the dread disease. Glimpses of life in the leper home at Molokai, Hawaiian Islands, are given by Edward Clifford, Irene Caudwell, and John Farrow, among others, in interesting lives of "Father Damien"; and "The Samaritans of Molokai" (Charles J. Dutton) deals with Damien and his successor, Brother Joseph Dutton, who after forty-four years' service in an environment and among scenes which would have been wellnigh impossible for many to face, wrote, "I never made any real sacrifice in coming here. I have been blessed for it." In lighter vein, Jack London describes the same colony where joy and laughter, intermingled with tears and sorrow, left ineffaceable memories on his heart. "Ben Hur," a tale of the Christ (Lew Wallace), has its happy ending in the restoration of the hero's mother and sister to health and strength. In "Who Walk Alone," Perry Burgess draws his story from life in the great leper settlement at Culion in the Philippine Islands, and shows how in refusal to be conquered by his affliction and in devoting his time and talents to useful service, one inmate not only made life bearable for himself but helped to lift others out of the slough of despondency and despair. "Lepers" (John Jackson, F.R.G.S.) is the wonderful

record of the first thirty years' work of the Mission to Lepers in many lands.

The medical section of leper literature has a formidable and ever-growing list of volumes by experts, dealing with various aspects of the disease all over the world and the advance in its treatment in modern days. "On Leprosy and Fish Eating," is the title of Dr Jonathan Hutchinson's book in which he sought to establish his theory (long since exploded) that leprosy was contracted through the eating of fish. The "Archæological Essays" of Sir James Y. Simpson, Bart., M.D., D.C.L., and the modern medical works of outstanding authorities are of great interest even to non-medical readers.

In legendary writings a whole treasure-house lies open to the imaginative reader :—

Tradition has it that the famous wells at Bath, Somersetshire, owe their origin to the leper prince Bladud, expelled from the royal palace and reduced to the position of swineherd by reason of his disease. Cured by bathing in the hot springs discovered by his charges, Bladud was restored to the court and ultimately succeeded to the throne. Grateful for his own recovery, he had the springs enclosed so that their precious curative waters might for all time be made available for suffering humanity.

In his beautiful home the Indian prince Siddharta Gautama was shielded from everything that was sad, for it had been foretold that the sight of three ills—old age, leprosy, and death—would induce him to give up a life of luxury to seek a solution for the sorrows and misery of the world. Notwithstanding all the precautions taken by his devoted father, the prophecy was fulfilled, incident by incident, and Gautama went

forth to a life of poverty in search of the truth. After long wandering and meditation, light burst upon the mind of the earnest seeker, and he left the shelter of the Bo tree as the "Buddha," the "Enlightened One," to spend the rest of his days in helping and teaching others and to found Buddhism, one of the great religions of the world.

The entrancing story of Rama and his bride Piya, exiled from their respective Indian palaces by reason of the disease, and their cure through partaking of the fruit and leaves of the kalawa or *hydnocarpus* tree is of special interest in view of the prominent place which the products of this tree are now taking in the modern treatment of leprosy.

Ministry to lepers is given a prominent place in the stories of lives of many of the Saints. The little leper child taken by St Elizabeth of Hungary and placed in her own bed was transformed into the Christ Child. The legend of St Julian and his response to a leper's need, ends in the suppliant appearing as the Lord Jesus, Who carried His succourer to Paradise. St Basil the Great founded a hospital for lepers near Cæsarea. The saintly Hugh of Lincoln not only provided hospitals for the lepers in his neighbourhood but personally ministered to the inmates. St Francis of Assisi, who in his rich and careless life turned aside with fear and disgust from the leper who sought his help, became the devoted friend of these outcasts and ordained service to this stricken class as one of the outstanding rules of his fraternity, the Franciscans or Grey Friars. In his latter years St Francis declared that the "tenderness he bore the lepers was the sole merit which began to draw upon him, a sinner, the mercy of God." The healing of a leper at the door of

a church in Paris was one of many miracles ascribed to St Martin of Tours. St Bridget of Kildare and St Catherine of Siena were also credited with miraculous healing powers as regards leprosy. Of St Catherine it is recorded that in nursing an advanced case from which all others fled she contracted the scourge herself, but that after the death of the patient the scales fell from her hands leaving them more beautiful than ever before. The story of St Edward the Confessor and the crippled leper beggar, Michael, is associated with the building of Westminster Abbey. Four times had Michael crawled to Rome to seek a cure for his sickness ; four times in vain. One night as he lay asleep he had a vision of St Peter coming to him and asking if he still wished to be restored to health, but he answered his sickness was so advanced that human aid was powerless. To the sufferer's astonishment St Peter replied, " Thy prayers have been heard, and if King Edward will bear thee to the chapel in his arms thy cure shall be granted." Next day as the leper sat begging by the roadside musing over his vision, the king's treasurer passed his way. " Hold, Sir Treasurer," cried the beggar, " a message for the king," and then recounted his dream. The royal servant listened patiently but said how impossible it was that such a thing should be done. On his return to the palace, however, the Treasurer did not fail to tell the leper's story, and to his surprise, instead of the expected refusal the king declared, " Right gladly will I bear him," and straightway went out to carry the helpless sufferer to the high altar of the Abbey, there to receive the promised cure.

In art the leper is a subject selected by great religious painters. The whole story of Job has been portrayed in the powerful work of the poet and painter

William Blake. In one of Holbein's pictures at Munich, St Elizabeth is seen distributing bread and wine to a company of lepers whose features and limbs show the disease in all its horror and mutilation. It is believed that this work was created from studies of patients in the leper home at Augsburg. In the Sistine Chapel at Rome is the great fresco by Cosimo Rosselli, of Christ preaching the Sermon on the Mount and thereafter descending to be confronted by the leper whom he cured. Lazarus, the leper beggar of New Testament days, surrounded by dogs, the scavengers of the city, and looked upon as unclean like himself, has been depicted by Harold Copping, Gustave Doré, Sir John E. Millais and Eugene Burnand. Among the frescoes by Frederick Shields which covered the walls of the Chapel of the Ascension, Bayswater Road, London (demolished, alas! by enemy action in the second world war), was the exquisite painting, "The Healing of the Leper," into which the artist had introduced all the objects mentioned by Moses as necessary for the ritual of cleansing, the scarlet, hyssop, and even the sparrows. Tissot in his famous series of 365 biblical pictures, the outcome of four years' sojourn in Palestine, included at least five leper subjects: "Miriam shut out from the Camp"; "Job hearing the Sad Tidings of Family Disaster"; "Job's Happy Home Circle"; "The Healing of an Individual Leper"; and "The Healing of the Ten Lepers." "The Grateful Leper" has been portrayed by Van Dyck; Picart has "The Desolation of Job"; Tissot, "The Healing of the Leper at Capernaum"; and Rubens, "Mary anointing the Feet of Jesus."

Turning to poetry, J. Russell Lowell's beautiful legend, "The Vision of Sir Launfal," at once comes to

mind. On the eve of setting forth in quest of the Holy Grail this knight shrank from the sight of a hideous leper crouched at his castle gate, to whom he threw a piece of gold. Years passed and Sir Launfal returned, himself a destitute beggar, old, frail, and disappointed, for health and strength had been spent in vain. Strangers occupied his former home, under the wall of which he sought shelter from the biting blast of the winter wind. Suddenly he was startled by the pleading words, "For Christ's sweet sake, I beg an alms." Looking round, he saw a leper by his side. No longer did he turn away in loathing. Dividing his single crust in two, he broke the ice at the edge of the stream and gave the sufferer to eat and drink. Scarcely had he done this when a dazzling light shone round the spot and the leper transformed into the person of Christ stood before him, giving the assurance that in his gracious response to the needy cry Sir Launfal had achieved his life's ambition, ministering not only to the leper but also to the Master Himself.

"In many climes, without avail,
Thou hast spent thy life for the Holy Grail ;
Behold it is here—this cup which thou
Didst fill at the streamlet for me but now ;
This crust is my body broken for thee,
This water His blood that died on the tree ;
The Holy Supper is kept, indeed,
In whatso we share with another's need ;
Not what we give, but what we share—
For the gift without the giver is bare ;
Who gives himself with his alms feeds three—
Himself, his hungering neighbour, and me."

"The Leper" (N. P. Willis) indicates the general attitude of the Jewish populace to the disease at the time of Christ's earthly ministry. Helon, one of Judah's

young and beautiful nobles, fallen victim to the scourge, passed through the city gates on his way to exile with "ashes on his brow, sackcloth about his loins, and on his lip a covering." And, as he passed, the cry rang out, "Room for the leper, room!" What a prospect lay before him! Debarred from ever again entering the temple of his God, he was forbidden to come near the crowded street or busy mart, to cross a human threshold, to listen to anyone who might wish to speak to him or even to quench his thirst at any fountain or well used by the healthy. Only one source of comfort remained: "When thy heart is heavy, and thine eyes are dim, lift up thy prayer beseechingly to Him, Who from the tribes of men, selected thee to feel the chastening rod. Depart, O leper! and forget not God."

Weary and heart-broken, Helon sat down to rest beside a stagnant pool and prayed that he might die. Footsteps approached, but with no strength to fly, he drew the covering closer on his lips, crying "Unclean, unclean," then fell to the ground to let the stranger pass. Nearer and nearer the footsteps came, and bending over the prostrate figure the stranger gently called his name, then taking a little water in his hand he laid it on the leper's brow, saying "Be clean," and Helon, cleansed and healed, fell at Jesus' feet and worshipped Him.

Longfellow's "Golden Legend" is the story of a leper prince of Bavaria whose cure could only be effected through the voluntary death of a young maiden. Just as the supreme sacrifice was about to be made, a miraculous cure was effected, and the tale has a happy ending in the marriage of "Elsie" and her prince.

“The Testament of Cresseid” (Henryson) is a continuation of Chaucer’s “Troilus and Cressida.” Faithless Cresseid, disloyal to her lover, blames the gods for the fate which has overtaken her. For this act of impiety, it is decreed that Cresseid shall be smitten with leprosy, Saturn, the messenger of the gods, conveying this decision to her in a vision. On awakening, she hurries to the glass to find the dream a reality, for the disease had already begun its devastating work—

“Then rais scho up and tuik
Ane poleist glas,
And quhen scho saw hir face sa deformait
Gif scho in hart was wae aneuch, God wait.”

Her father was summoned, and when he

“Luikit on hir uglye lipper face
The quhilk befor was quhite as lillic flour,
Wrigand his handis oftymes ha said allacc
That he had livit to se that wofull hour.
For he knew weill that their was na succour
To her seiknes, and that dowbit his pane.”

From her beautiful home, Cresseid was conducted to the spittal house, joining her companions in begging excursions in the neighbourhood. One day a company of soldiers, with her old lover Troylus at their head, passed by. In response to the cry for alms the soldiers “schuik coppis gude speid,” but their captain, startled to see in one of the lepers a look which recalled Cresseid to his mind, threw to her a purse of gold and jewels. On counting up their gains the beggars marvel at her wealth, and one tells that the donor was Sir Troylus. On hearing this Cresseid swooned, and on reviving made her “testament,” directing that her belongings, with the exception of the “royall ring set with rubies

red," were to be divided between her leper companions, the ring to be sent to her benefactor and old friend Troylus.

In "Happy" or "The Leper's Bride" Tennyson's theme is the story of a young wife's devotion to her husband who had returned from the Crusades stricken with leprosy. "I loved you first when young and fair, but now I love you most," was her passionate avowal, and her determination to share her husband's banishment finds touching expression: "If you be dead, then I am dead who only live for you." "If I had been the leper would you have left the wife?" "In the name of the everlasting God, I will live and die with you."

Barbour's "Bruce" pictures the grief of the Scottish army when King Robert fell victim to the dread malady, and the willingness with which any of his loyal followers would have taken his place and borne his sufferings if this could lead to his cure.

"Then wit ye that his men were woe,
For none was in that company,
That would have been half so sorry
For to have seen his brother dead,
Lying before him in that stead,
As they were all for his sickness,
For all their comfort in him was."

Matthew Arnold versifies an incident in the ancient legend of St Brandan, where the mariner sailing the northern seas on a bitter winter night sees an iceberg, and on it a living form :—

"It is, Oh ! where shall Brandan fly ?
The traitor Judas out of hell."

To the sailor saint the traitor relates how for one hour each Christmas night he was granted a respite

from torment because of a kindly, long-forgotten act to a leper :—

“ To the poor wretch my cloak I cast,
Saw him look eased and hurried by.”

“ Once every year, when carols wake
On earth the Christmas night’s repose,
Arising from the sinner’s lake,
I journey to these healing snows.”

“ Tears started to St Brandan’s eyes,
He bow’d his head, he breathed a prayer ;
When he look’d up, tenantless lies
The iceberg in the frosty air.”

The translation of “The Spanish Ballads,” by J. G. Lockhart, LL.B., includes “The Cid and the Leper.” This famous Spanish hero is remembered for many kind deeds : “Where’er he goes, much alms he throws to feeble folk and poor.” The outstanding expression of his compassion is found in this poem in the incident regarding the poor leper found sinking in a bog. Dismounting, he pulled the man to safety, set him on his horse, satisfied his hunger by having him eat and drink at his own table, and finally shared his bed with this very undesirable companion. At midnight the Cid awoke to find his bed-fellow gone.—“Loudly he lifted up his voice, with speed a lamp was brought, yet nowhere was the leper seen, though far and near they sought.” Returning to his chamber, the Cid fell asleep and had a vision of a figure clad in white who said that he was St Lazarus, the leper whom he had succoured, and that for his good deed the Cid’s reward was to be great—honour in battle and in peace, success in all his doings, a death of honour, and an abundant entry into Paradise. Truly the “cup of

cold water" in this case was richly blessed to the donor as well as to the participant.

The Old Testament Book of Job has been described by Froude as one "which will one day, perhaps when it is allowed to stand on its own merits, be seen towering up alone, far above all the poetry of the world." From the profundity of despair the leper poet rises to the sublimest heights till the climax is reached in his declaration: "I know that my Redeemer liveth," words set to matchless music by Handel in the "Messiah," and which in the burial service of the Church have brought comfort and hope to countless broken and desolate hearts.

Heroes and Heroines

FATHER DAMIEN, Hawaii.

Rev. J. E. DAVIS, M.A., India.

Sir GEORGE TURNER, M.B., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.,
South Africa.

Miss MARY REED, India.

Mrs GONG, China.

FROM the long and illustrious Roll of Honour of those who have rendered outstanding service in the age-long fight against leprosy, the above names have been selected on account of the tragic fact that each became a victim of the disease.

FATHER DAMIEN

The death of Father Damien at Molokai, Hawaiian Islands, in 1889, not only awakened universal admiration for the heroic work of this consecrated pioneer but aroused realisation of and responsibility for the leper problem. In an attempt to eradicate the disease from these islands where, by the middle of the nineteenth century, it had assumed alarming proportions, the Board of Health made it notifiable and established a settlement on the island of Molokai to which lepers were compulsorily transported. This law, rigidly enforced, came as a thunderbolt to the carefree, joy-loving Hawaiians, who, failing to see why they should surrender their stricken dear ones, often attempted to conceal them from official eyes. Song and laughter gave place to dirge and weeping as

friends and children were severed from their homes, and the fact that in those days their coffins accompanied the victims told its own tale.

“ The moon is shining down with tropic splendour
On a fair island set in sapphire seas ;
The air is luminous with starlight tender,
Bright as the sun’s in paler climes than these :
And all that loveliness for eyes that weep,
And cease not till they close in death’s long sleep.”

—MARY GEORGES.

The call to give up the large parish to which he had been assigned on his arrival in Hawaii in 1864 came quite unexpectedly to the young Belgian priest. At a meeting of fellow-missionaries the desperate need of the exiles on Molokai was stressed, and Damien’s offer of service, gladly accepted, was followed by immediate departure for his new post. What were the conditions? Even after Father Damien’s death the brief description of a visit paid by Robert Louis Stevenson to Hawaii makes grim reading : “ I do not think that I am a man more than usually timid, but I never recall the days and nights I spent upon that island promontory without heartfelt thanks that I am somewhere else.”

At the time of Damien’s arrival law and order were non-existent. Patients in all stages of the disease, many “ living corpses,” mixed freely and sought oblivion from their terrible affliction in card-playing, dancing, and drinking. Water, food, and clothing were utterly inadequate ; the death-rate was appalling. With his own hands Damien made coffins and buried the dead. He became the confidant and friend of the older folk, the lover and playmate of the children, many of them orphans with no one to care for them.

To minister in spiritual things to his sorely-stricken flock he counted as a rare and precious privilege.

As pastor, doctor, nurse, teacher, architect, builder, carpenter, grave-digger, and in a score of other capacities, the "Father" came into close contact with his family, taking no precautions to avoid personal touch. From the very commencement he felt that sooner or later he would share the fate of those to whom he ministered and in 1884 he suspected the presence of the disease in his system. One day he plunged his foot into scalding water feeling no pain and not realising what he had done until he saw the effect. Later his own verdict was confirmed by a visiting doctor who said, "I cannot bear to tell you, but what you say is true," to which the reply was given, "It is no shock to me for I have long felt sure of it. Whenever I preach to my people, I do not say 'my brethren,' but 'we lepers.' People pity me and think me unfortunate, but I think myself the happiest of missionaries. I would not be cured if the price of my cure was that I must leave the island and give up my work."

Medical treatment was sought at Honolulu, but the disease was too far advanced for any hope of betterment, and after a fortnight Damien returned "home" to suffer all the disfigurement and mutilation of the cruel scourge, his burden lightened as far as possible by the tender care and comradeship of those who in his latter years reached the island to become his co-workers and friends.

On 15th April 1889 the end came peacefully, and beneath the tree which had sheltered him on his arrival he was laid to rest amidst the lamentation of those for whom he had laid down his life. For forty-six years his grave was a consecrated spot, but the land

of his birth claimed the dust of its honoured son and in 1936 a flag-covered casket was carried aboard a Belgian vessel to be met at Antwerp by the King of the Belgians, the Archbishop of Belgium, and a crowd of 100,000 spectators. After an impressive service in the Cathedral, a procession through the beflagged streets was made to the railway station, and thence the casket was conveyed to Louvain (his old university town), where the grave had been lined with soil and flowers from the original resting-place in the far Pacific.

REV. J. E. DAVIS, M.A.

One of a family of nine children, John E. Davis was born in the village of Wicklow, Ontario, Canada, in 1858. The hardships and discipline of early days were a valuable training ground for later years. When four years old he looked after a neighbour's cattle for one penny a day and his dinner. Handing him three-pence at the end of three days, his master said, "Now, my little man, what are you going to do with so much money?" "Please sir, I'll give it to my mother to buy tea with," was the prompt reply. After his ninth birthday, school was never attended during the summer months which were spent in strenuous farm and other work to help the home finances. Winter evenings were devoted to study. Arts and theological courses were completed, and after ordination as a missionary of the Baptist Missionary Society, Mr Davies with his wife sailed for India in 1887. Ten years were spent at Cocanada in the Madras Presidency; then transference was made to Ramachandrapuram in the same province. From the day he reached this spot premonition that some special event was going to take place in his life

recurred again and again. At times he felt that he was to receive a fortune, at others it seemed as if God had some great purpose for him to serve, or yet again, a great darkness gathered round him as though something dreadful was to happen ; yet behind the cloud there was always a silver lining and a conviction that all would be well with him.

Leprosy was widespread in the Ramachandrapuram district and the urgent necessity of doing something for its victims was intensified by the discovery of a case amongst the servants of a colleague. In 1900 the generosity of a Canadian friend provided for the initial expenses and for the erection of the Dr Kellock Memorial Home. The addition of this branch of work proved too great a strain for the already overtaxed missionary and resulted in a severe breakdown necessitating immediate furlough. Passing through London on his way to his homeland (Canada), Mr Davis consulted a specialist who hesitated to give his opinion. Pressed to do so, however, he stated that he did not wish to startle his patient but feared that the illness was of a very serious nature and might even be tubercular leprosy. Absolutely stunned, Mr Davis passed out from the consulting room scarce knowing what he was doing or where he was going. " Had he told me that I was going to die that night I would have said, ' The Lord's will be done,' but I was scarcely prepared for the other verdict." Three days later Mrs Davis—to whom the verdict had been broken—and the children sailed for Canada, leaving Mr Davis to enter a London hospital in the hope that treatment might prove beneficial. At the end of eight weary months, improvement allowed him to travel to Canada to join his family on the farm where they had made their home,

and where a special apartment had been erected for the invalid. Ever at hand to give counsel and support in the upbringing of the young family, assisting beyond the limit of his strength in the work of the farm, he lived entirely apart from his wife and the children to whom the nature of their father's illness was not divulged. By 1907 the sight of one eye was gone and the other had become affected. "I did my own washing, scrubbed my floor, washed my dishes, and tried to keep my room tidy, but it was difficult for I was half blind." The death of Mrs Davis in 1910, and the rapid advance of the disease determined the sufferer to enter the leper home at Tracadie, New Brunswick, and by the end of the year this resolution was carried out. He was the only English-speaking patient in the Institution, and religious fellowship was restricted through the nursing being in the hands of Roman Catholic sisters, so that the loneliness was at times almost unbearable. During the last two years of his life the visits of a minister friend were a great solace and joy, and although with the advance of the disease his physical condition became more and more distressing and his sufferings intense, to the very end his interest was keen in world events, especially in all the activities of his old mission field.

On 28th April 1915 rest and release came to the weary sufferer, whose last message to his friends was, "Henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus."

SIR GEORGE TURNER, M.B., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.

The memorial tablets in some of our old churches afford an interesting and instructive study of honoured and sacrificial service the record of which might

otherwise have been lost to posterity. In Hoddesdon Church, Herts., where Sir George Turner was a worshipper in his early days, one such tablet has the following inscription :—

“ In grateful memory of Sir George Turner, Kt., M.B., for many years medical officer of this district and resident in this parish, afterwards Medical Officer of Health for the Transvaal and member of the Legislative Council. By his discovery of a remedy for rinderpest he conferred a priceless and lasting benefit on the colony. For many years he made a study of leprosy with a view to its cure, and at last himself contracted the disease and sacrificed his life in the endeavour to save that of others. He died at Colyton in Devon, March 12th, 1915, aged sixty-seven.

“ This tablet was erected by a few friends in admiration of his devotion to duty and spirit of self-sacrifice.”

During his thirteen years' service in South Africa, five of them as Medical Officer for Cape Colony, and eight in filling a similar post in the Transvaal, Dr Turner's interests far exceeded his official duties, which might well have been regarded as a whole-time task. Two deadly foes to the well-being of the colony—rinderpest and leprosy—daily confronted him and pressed heavily on his heart, and towards their eradication he ungrudgingly devoted his time and talents. Rinderpest, the most fatal of cattle diseases with a mortality of 90 per cent., decimated African herds, and his invaluable discovery of a remedy led to the stamping out of the malady and to the saving of millions of pounds. Attention was then more intensively centred on efforts to find a cure for leprosy, the effects of which

were seen all over his area in the pitiful wrecks of its victims, young and old alike. As medical superintendent of the Government leper home at Pretoria with its hundreds of patients, Dr Turner had ample scope for prosecuting research at first hand, but realising that medical skill in itself was not sufficient, he secured the services of a chaplain whose advent brought a new mental and moral atmosphere into the institution and was of the greatest possible value in bringing comfort, courage, and even joy to its inmates.

Rising at dawn so that time might be available for laboratory work, the doctor proceeded to a round of the wards, and again at the close of his official day he involuntarily turned his steps towards the home to have a chat with his leper friends, invariably followed by a crowd of leper children who had a special place in his great heart and by whom, as well as by the older folk, he was passionately loved.

Retiral from Africa at the age limit in 1908, and settlement at the village of Colyton, Devon, led to no break in research work, which was unremittingly continued in laboratories in the homeland. Like all scientists, Dr Turner must have been fully conscious of the grave risks constantly run in making his experiments, and the discovery of suspicious marks on his hand was at once regarded as an indication of the presence of the disease, his own diagnosis being independently confirmed by two specialists. Foiled but unbeaten, the intrepid warrior continued his labours so long as strength permitted. The conferment of a knighthood, on the personal initiative of King George V, in 1913 was a well-deserved recognition of the work and devotion of this heroic benefactor who

two years later passed peacefully away in the quiet of his village home where he was a loved and honoured resident.

“To live in hearts we leave behind is not to die.”

MISS MARY REED

At Chandag, on a spur of the Himalayas, 6,000 ft. above sea-level, stands a beautiful little Church, a landmark for miles around, in front of which lies a grave marked with a white cross bearing the simple inscription :—

Mary Reed

Friend of Lepers, Chandag
1891-1945

“I will make all my mountains a way.”

Before entering on what proved to be her life-work at Chandag, Miss Reed had given six years to scholastic work under the American Methodist Episcopal Church Mission, partly at the historic city of Cawnpore. When her first furlough fell due, the state of her health gave cause for anxiety and it was hoped that rest and treatment in her childhood's home in America would lead to restoration and a return in renewed vigour to her much-loved work. A return, yes! but under what unlooked for circumstances and for what a different purpose! Expert medical opinion in America and London agreed that in some unaccountable way the most terrible of all diseases, leprosy, had been contracted; the future seemed dark indeed. To remain

in the home circle or to take up her former vocation was alike impossible, but in spite of the blow which struck her like a bombshell, Miss Reed was convinced that there were still a place and a task for her in the busy world. Her thoughts instinctively turned to a lonely hill-station in the north of India where she had seen something of leper work, and the resolution was made that she would devote the remainder of her days to the care of others similarly afflicted. Her own Society having no opening for such service approached the Mission to Lepers, and by a happy arrangement the superintendence of its home at Chandag in the United Provinces was assigned to her. Described by Miss Reed as "one of the fairest spots on God's beautiful earth," her new home was all that could be desired from a scenic point of view, but by reason of natural physical barriers and difficulty of approach it was shut off to a great extent from contact with the outer world. The trying nature of her work was intensified by the fact that many of the poor lepers were illiterate and many in a very distressing condition through the inroads of the disease. Reading and music proved a great solace, Miss Reed confessing that if in her lonely cottage she didn't sing songs in the night she would never have strength for the tasks of the day. The motto affixed to one bookcase—"No man knows solitude who makes books his friends"—showed what the contents of her library meant to her. Neither music nor literature, however, could compensate for lack of human companionship and the visits of old and congenial friends were a rare pleasure. Such a visitor was Mr Wellesley C. Bailey, founder of the Mission to Lepers, whose description of an open-air service on Chandag heights gives a glimpse of the suffering and

sadness by which the missionary was constantly surrounded.

“After the women were seated in the sunshine, a long, white, straggling line of poor helpless creatures was seen wending its way up the mountain-side from the men’s home. In front of the women and close to the speaker were three little girls with winsome faces but all far gone with the disease. Among the men were several boys with sad, pathetic looks.”

In Miss Reed’s case the malady never made great advance nor was there any mutilation or grave disfigurement. At times there was severe suffering, at others the disease appeared to be completely arrested. Improvement was so marked in 1906 that a visit to America was possible, and for one brief month there was happy reunion with her loved ones there. Years afterwards, a sister asked if she would not like to spend the eventide of her days at home but the reply was, “No, my work and duty here are not yet finished. How I long to see you dear ones, but the meeting will be in the Heavenly Home.”

Leper work by no means absorbed all Miss Reed’s sympathy. Her interest in the village life of the surrounding healthy communities was keen, and many a young lad climbed the heights to acquire a working knowledge of English or to study the Christian religion through her Bible classes. The weekly classes for the hill-women and girls were a delight to teacher and pupils alike.

On 8th April 1943, in her 89th year, the 58th year of mission service and the 52nd year of ministry to her fellow sufferers in Chandag, this noble heroine of the Indian mission field was called to her rest and reward.

MRS GONG

In China leper villages are often found outside the walls of its great cities where men, women, and children in all stages of the disease congregate in squalor and wretchedness, the small allowance made to them by the authorities being supplemented by begging. Of the settlement at the west gate of the city of Foochow a missionary wrote, "The sum total of misery was a bit overwhelming." The smoking of opium and gambling were the chief occupations of the men; the women had little to brighten the monotony of their sad lives. Some of them were blind, some unable to walk, some without hands, some totally helpless. Determined that help should be given, a lady missionary after great difficulty found a bible-woman (Mrs Gong) willing to visit and befriend these outcasts. Without the least fear of the disease this intrepid worker threw her whole soul and strength into the task allotted to her. Sewing and reading were accomplishments eagerly sought after by the women and girls whose standards of life and morality were unconsciously raised by the hymns and Scripture lesson, indispensable preliminaries to the coveted lessons.

The warning to avoid close contact with those to whom she ministered fell on deaf ears, for although Mrs Gong kept her little room, to which lepers were not admitted, scrupulously clean, she never refused help to any sufferer. Nine years passed and then the blow fell, in a message to the missionary, "The bible-woman fears that she has contracted the disease." Examination proved that the fear was a certainty, and though treatment at first seemed to lead to improvement this was only of a very temporary nature. It was

found that in all probability the poison had been transmitted while Mrs Gong was rubbing peppermint oil, her favourite remedy, into the sores of a poor man who had no fingers with which to do this for himself and whose case was so desperate that even his fellow-lepers refused to touch him. "I never thought I would get it," was the pathetic remark of this brave sufferer, whose heaviest burden lay in the reproach of the heathen lepers, "You said your God was able to take care of you, but he has not done it." Rather would we remember the quaint but comforting message of the Chinese pastor, "Your love was too heavy."

For four years after the appearance of the disease this heroic worker ministered in ever increasing weakness and suffering, her passing leaving a blank which it was almost impossible to fill.

Medical and Other Treatment

TWENTY centuries ago the command, "Cleanse the lepers," was given by the greatest of all physicians to a company of twelve men, not one of them, so far as is known, with any knowledge of medical skill, but each sent out endowed with special powers to heal all manner of disease. On their return the apostles gave an account of their stewardship, and although no details are given in the Gospel narratives (Mark vi. 30 ; Luke ix. 10) it is very probable that in their healing ministry the restoration of lepers would be included, although if this class of sufferers had not been specially commended to their care, it might easily have been overlooked in their ministrations.

Failure to prosecute medical research in leprosy in early days might be attributed to the way in which the scourge was regarded. A belief commonly held by primitive peoples was that it was sent by God, or the gods, as a punishment for sin committed in this or in a former life and must therefore be patiently and uncomplainingly borne. When Job's three friends visited him in his affliction they all agreed that he was bearing the penalty of sin. "Whoever perished being innocent?" was the challenge of the first ; the second declared that if Job had lived a pure and upright life he would never have been called upon to endure such suffering ; the third gave it as his opinion that his punishment was a very lenient one for all the pride and boasting of the patriarch in the days of his prosperity.

Fatalism has often led to tragedies in leper life.

When sickness or disaster falls on a home in the North Sudan, the common remark is, "Min Allah," ("It is from God"), therefore nothing must be done to fight against Him. A leper father in a home where there were healthy children, pled with over and over again to allow the children to be removed from danger, consistently refused his consent with the unchanging reply, "Min Allah." Eight years later a daughter became affected; in the following year, two sons, and within a twelve-month the little daughter of eight became victims.

The accepted belief that the disease was incurable and therefore beyond human aid made the outlook hopeless for the sufferer and his friends, and in districts where leprosy was regarded with horror and fear, appalling cruelty was the usual practice. The burning or burying alive of lepers was a common occurrence in the East. The sight of the burning alive of a victim in Bengal in 1812 so moved William Carey, the first missionary to be sent from England to India, that he could not rest until a leper home was established in Calcutta. A British magistrate in the Punjab found it necessary to safeguard the lives of the miserable sufferers in his district by issuing the command, "Thou shalt not bury thy lepers alive." Over and over again in China attempts have been made by officials to rid their areas of the disease by wholesale massacres of the stricken, sometimes under the pretext of inviting them to a feast, then closing the doors of the building and setting fire to it, the soldiers on guard shooting down any who attempted to escape. The report from a missionary who wished to begin leper work in Japan was that sufferers in her district were often shut up in cupboards for years, others starved and cast adrift,

and very few treated like human beings. In the East Indies, it was a common custom to set fire to the hut in which the victim was isolated, and who, in many cases, was too helpless to make any effort to escape. Lepers in Sumatra were taken to the jungle where in an open space a rude hut was set up. A little food was provided, and the occupant was then left to the mercy of the wild beasts. Yet another method of getting rid of an undesirable was to take him out to sea in an open, leaking boat and then abandon him to his fate.

In Old and New Testament history, instances of healing are recorded but these were through divine and not human agency. In one case only was a leper commanded to submit to what might be considered treatment, and how nearly the blessing was missed in his case! To "Go and wash in Jordan!": it almost seemed an insult when the proud captain Naaman thought of the fine rivers of his own beautiful city, but he did not know that the seemingly insignificant Jordan differed from any other river, as in certain parts its salt springs were rich in healing properties; nor could he have imagined that obedience to God's command would, in his own case, result in such a rich and miraculous blessing.

In all countries medicinal springs have been known and valued all through the centuries largely on account of the healing virtues possessed by them. Some were recognised as affording relief, or it might be cure, for all ills, others as beneficial in the case of specific complaint.

A famous well on Mount Sinai in Arabia was that of St Katherine, a beautiful and gifted girl who, at the age of fourteen, on the death of her father, became

queen of Cyprus and later suffered death at the hands of the Roman tyrant Maxentius. Tradition states that angels bore her remains to Mount Sinai and laid them in an almost inaccessible spot on the mount, the interment recalling that of Moses described in the well-known lines :—

“ And no man knew the sepulchre . . .

For the angels of God upturned the sod and laid
the dead man there.”

After more than a century the memory of St Katherine continued to be held in reverence, notably by a company of Christian hermits living in the desert surrounding Mount Sinai who had there erected a chapel to her memory. A legend tells that an angel was sent to guide these men to the saint's resting-place to carry back the remains from thence for burial in their church. The hazardous journey was safely accomplished, and with great solemnity the precious burden was laid in the chapel, which became a place of pilgrimage at which miraculous cures were effected. That the healing oil said to flow from the body was regarded as beneficial in the treatment of leprosy is revealed in Scottish history a thousand years later in the story of Queen Margaret, whose sympathy and help were generously given to all in need. The lepers in the neighbourhood of the royal palace at Dunfermline had a very special place in her affection, and to them she ministered with her own hands. This good queen commissioned St Catherine of Sciennes in Edinburgh to go to Arabia to fetch from the tomb at Mount Sinai a vessel of the oil which continued to flow from St Katherine's tomb, to be used for the relief of Scottish sufferers. The order was willingly obeyed and the

long and perilous journey almost accomplished when at Liberton, the southern suburb of Edinburgh, a few drops of the carefully guarded liquid were spilt. Sorely distressed, St Catherine besought God that the oil might not be wasted, and at the spot where the accident occurred a miraculous spring welled up. At its healing waters all classes sought relief. Whether or not this led to the settlement in this locality of large numbers of those stricken with the disease cannot be ascertained, but to this day Liberton is commonly believed to have been the "leper town" of Scotland's capital.

French history gives us the story of the Scottish prince Fiacre, a victim of leprosy. Resolved to resign an earthly crown for a life of religious meditation, Fiacre crossed to France and after many wanderings made his home in the forest of Brioul, where he erected a chapel in which his remains were interred in 670, the tomb becoming a sacred shrine. No authentic account of how this "glorious hermit" contracted leprosy is available. One legend states that on the death of his father two nobles were sent to invite the prince to occupy the Scottish throne, but he was so unwilling to resign his solitude that on hearing of their approach he prayed to God that he might be smitten with leprosy. His prayer was answered, and when the ambassadors arrived they were met by a leper so disfigured and mutilated that they pronounced him the "maist horribill creature in erd," and willingly accepted his refusal of the crown. The story records that Fiacre was cured after their departure, and for centuries thereafter sufferers from the "mal de St Fiacre," sought aid at the spring which, three hundred years after his death, burst through the floor of his chapel in Brioul.

The healing powers ascribed to St Ninian in his lifetime were reputed to continue long after his death, tradition recounting that lepers as well as others were cured at his tomb at Whithorn. Perhaps the most touching of the many stories which gather round King Robert the Bruce is that in which the royal leper is depicted as visiting this shrine a few months before his death, in the hope that relief granted to others similarly stricken might be vouchsafed to him, but alas! his expectations were not fulfilled and the king accompanied by his faithful knight, Sir James Douglas, retraced his steps to fight courageously his last and losing battle, for there was no cure for his sore sickness.

For twenty centuries the famous springs at Bath, Somersetshire, have poured out their healing waters for the benefit of mankind, and are still largely taken advantage of, though happily not for leprosy, the disease of their reputed founder.

Many legends gather round sacred pools and rivers of India resorted to by lepers as well as by other stricken folk. From Amritsar comes the story of a woman who, passing into the native bazaar one day, left her husband, a leper, by the side of a pool. The man sat idly gazing into the water watching a crow which hopped about its edge. Suddenly the crow dipped into the pool and came out white! Imagining that there must surely be something very wonderful about water which could so transform a bird, the sufferer wondered if it could not effect a miracle in his case also and thereupon crawled into the pool from which he emerged completely restored to health.

At Kusatsu, Japan, there is a leper village where hundreds of its inmates undergo treatment at the natural hot springs. An eye-witness records that five

times a day they put themselves through torture in entering the scalding waters which have been cooled to some little extent by rows of attendants beating the water with paddles. When the bath-master has tested the heat by pouring a few dippers of water over his own head, the first fifty in the ranks copy his example many times and then very gingerly enter the steaming bath, all joining in a chant to keep up their spirits. At the end of one minute, the leader announces, "Three minutes more!" ; and a shout goes up from fifty throats. "Two minutes more!" "One minute more!" and then, at the word, "Finished!" the entire occupants of the bath rise as if shot up and retire to enjoy a rest while the second squad takes their places.

Passing from the subject of miraculous waters, records show that the roots, leaves, and flowers of common plants and herbs were largely used for outward application or taken internally ; one herbal mentioning seventeen well-known varieties as being very effective in cases of leprosy. The monks were the doctors as well as the ministers of those days, and in the quiet of the beautiful monastery gardens distilled simple concoctions for medicinal purposes.

Witchcraft was resorted to, and in the 16th century it is recorded that a woman was committed for trial at Edinburgh because she declared that she could "heal" leprosy, which her accusers declared "the maist expert men in medicine were unable to do." Sir James Y. Simpson gives the cure of this amateur physician as a red cock, the blood of which was to be put into a bannock and given to the leper to eat. In the same century, in the north of Scotland, another so-called witch suffered death by drowning, on the accusation of a leper who maintained that his hand

had shrunk and withered as the result of the application of an ointment which she had given to him.

“Quick and certain” cures of quack doctors, eagerly partaken of by deluded patients, included strong poisons and fantastic concoctions made from scorpions, snakes, cats, frogs, and the bones of tigers, to mention only a few, the last-named being given in the belief that the strength and fierceness of the tiger would oust the demon of leprosy. An overdose of mercury partaken of without the knowledge of the superintendent led on one occasion to fatal consequences in a Korean leper home.

Not until about the last quarter of the 19th century was real advance recorded on the medical side and provision made to any appreciable extent for the care of leper victims. At the large home at Bergen in heavily stricken Norway, research had been unremittingly carried on by Dr Danielssen, who believed that the disease was hereditary. His labours were continued by his son-in-law Dr G. A. Hansen, who held that the scourge was contagious, and whose efforts were rewarded in 1874 by the discovery of the leprosy bacillus; a triumph arousing wide-spread interest in the medical world and the hope that this might lead to further success and ultimately to complete victory in the age-long fight. Almost another century has elapsed, however, without that hope being fulfilled, for notwithstanding ceaseless efforts made by experts in many lands, neither the manner in which the germ enters the system nor the nature of its destructive work has yet been discovered.

In the same year as the discovery of the bacillus, the Mission to Lepers, an international and inter-denominational society, was founded in Dublin by

an Irish missionary, Mr Wellesley Cosby Bailey. The success of this society is one of the romances of modern missionary effort, both physically and spiritually, on behalf of those to whom it ministers. The homes of the Mission, and later those of the co-operating American Mission to Lepers, have provided facilities for valuable research work by Government and other doctors interested, for it has been the aim of these societies from their formation to bring the latest medical discoveries within reach of the treatable inmates in all their institutions.

From time to time the appearance of new remedies raised high hopes that the longed-for cure had at last been discovered. Nastin in 1904 and Leprolin in 1910 gave good results in some cases, but each drug in turn had to be discarded, leaving doctors still baffled yet unbeaten.

From 1916 onwards, however, the startling terms "disease arrested" or "symptom-free" patients began to appear in leprosy records bringing what was likely to prove a real ray of light into the darkness of despair. In the great American home at Culion in the Philippine Islands, Dr Heiser turned his attention to a centuries-old cure for skin diseases, chaulmoogra oil, which in its crude form could not be orally administered for any length of time on account of its nauseating effect. "I'd rather have leprosy than take another dose," was the verdict of some of the patients selected to try out the drug. With ever-growing faith in its efficacy, however, the doctor set himself to discover some other method of administration, ultimately devising a preparation which could be given by injection. Further development and improvement in the use of the chaulmoogra and hydnocarpus oils, more particularly through the

work of Sir Leonard Rogers and Dr Ernest Muir at the School of Tropical Medicine at Calcutta, and Dr Dean in Hawaii, led to a revolution in the medical outlook, vividly expressed in the words of another outstanding leprologist, the late Dr Isobel Kerr of the Dichpali home in South India: "Before, all was darkness and despair; all we could do was to try to inspire some faith and courage to endure the almost unendurable. Now, workers among lepers are like travellers who begin to see a light at the end of a long dark tunnel."

As an outcome of the wave of enthusiasm which followed the success of the new treatment in many lands, and largely through the observation of its results in the Indian homes of the Mission to Lepers, the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association—a medical society aiming through different avenues and methods to control the disease and to work for its eradication within the British Empire—was founded in London in 1923.

The success of the new treatment caused the old despair to give way to undue optimism, patients imagining that through a few applications of the wonder-working needle a permanent cure would be effected. Such claims had to be discounted, though it was never doubted that real and lasting advance had been made and that to those in the early stages of the disease the promise of renewed life might be extended.

On a blazing hot day some Indian missionaries, who were finding existence almost unbearable, came across a company of lepers bubbling over with joy. Asked why they were so happy, the answer quickly came that they were *feeling* "prickly heat," not a condition for

which to be particularly grateful in a climate like that of India, but an unmixed blessing for these sufferers, as it indicated a return of sensation to parts of their bodies which had literally been dead for years. "I feel your hands all over me," was the pathetic but heartening remark of another patient as patch after patch of his skin responded to the slightest touch of the doctor. The fall of the death rate from 25 per cent. to 2 per cent. at a leper home in Korea was practical evidence of the wonderful change effected at that centre. At a centre in South India a burial fund had been instituted to which lepers contributed half a farthing a month. Going his rounds one day after the new treatment had been in operation for a brief time, the collector of the fund was met with the remark, "We are not going to pay any more! What's the use? No one dies these days," and so the fund itself became extinct.

Never was there a time when interest in leper work was so great nor medical research in this branch more intensively pursued. In recent days new drugs, sulphone preparations, have been tried with encouraging results, but their use is still largely in the experimental stages and the question of finance limits their wide application.

There are many disappointments to record, but the annual discharge from Government and Mission homes of increased numbers of leper patients pronounced symptom-free or disease-arrested cases, many with no signs of deformity, gives fresh inspiration to doctor and patient alike to co-operate until the deadly enemy is overcome and another victory is added to the laurels of medical science down the centuries.

Over the door of an old medical college in Paris the words were engraved, "I bound up his wounds, God healed him." It is in this spirit that the finest and most successful treatment in leper work is being carried on in the world to-day.

The Future Outlook

THE future of the leper problem is faced with what would seem to be almost insuperable difficulties. The immensity of the task (the estimated leper population in the world to-day is 5,000,000), the baffling nature of the disease in its insidious working, and the slender resources at the disposal of those engaged in the conflict might well daunt the keenest enthusiast were it not that the realisation of what has been achieved in other fields of science gives inspiration for continued and intensive effort in this branch which still defies the highest skill of medical experts.

The conflict is a world-wide one; encouragement comes in the knowledge that in modern days it is being fought by a world-wide army. The health of any country is no longer an insular concern merely affecting itself. With the annihilation of distance, increasing intercourse and intermingling of peoples of every land and race, it is incumbent upon the health authorities of all countries to take every possible precaution to prevent the introduction of fresh disease to their territories. Those within the temperate zone cannot lightly set aside their responsibilities by declaring that leprosy is a disease of tropical lands alone, for although the statement is to a certain extent true, the scourge knows no bounds, no land can claim to be impervious to its attack, no individual to be safe from its secret assault.

There is probably no country in the world which

sends a larger proportion of its young folks overseas than Britain, and it is a matter of honour on the part of the motherland to do all in her power to ensure healthy conditions for her children in the lands of their adoption. Britain is dependent for her daily food to a great extent on overseas production, and the conditions under which it is provided—the health of coolies and labourers in distant lands who ingather the tea, coffee, cocoa, tobacco, and cereal harvests, or cut the banana, date, and other fruit crops for export—is of vital importance. Surely in this connection the danger of leprosy infection falls to be guarded against in every way.

The records of health after long and unremitting labour among lepers show that as a general rule it is not *within* a leper home, into which many a foreigner will never have occasion to enter and where every precaution is taken to avoid risk to the healthy worker, that the greatest danger lies, but *without*, in the ordinary every-day world where contact may unconsciously be made with someone in the infective stage of the disease from whom the poisonous germ is easily transmitted, especially to an undermined or under-nourished constitution. Public transport, crowds, and bazaars or street-markets of the East are all danger spots from a health point of view.

“Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased,” is one of the Old Testament prophecies (Daniel xii. 4) which every day is being more and more fulfilled, for good or for ill. Modern transport facilities have brought the ends of the earth together, and international gatherings of experts in every line of life are constantly being held. A century ago an international congress on the subject of leprosy would

never have been dreamt of. The disease, when considered at all, was regarded as incurable and hopeless, and there the matter rested. Refuges into which its victims might be segregated were, sometimes compulsorily, provided by local authorities, or out of compassion by generous private benefactors, but to the medical profession as a whole the subject was of no interest.

In 1897 however, the first International Leprosy Congress was held at Berlin, followed by others at Bergen (1909), Strasburg (1923), Cairo (1938), Havana (1948), and the fact that Madrid has already been selected for the next international gathering in 1953, only five years ahead, shows that consideration of this scourge is taking an increasingly important place on the medical programme. Each of these congresses, attended by leading leprologists from all over the world, has had its valuable contribution to make, and their propaganda in stirring up public interest, sympathy, and support, as well as bringing fresh hope to those stricken and so inducing ever increasing numbers to come forward for treatment in the early stages of the disease, has been most helpful.

At Berlin an important finding was that leprosy is contagious but not hereditary. In reaffirming the resolutions of the Berlin Conference, the Bergen gathering took a great step forward in declaring that in the light of further clinical research "the belief is induced that the disease is not incurable." Other important recommendations were, the strict isolation of leper beggars, the prevention of lepers from following occupations which might be regarded as peculiarly dangerous in view of the contagious character of the disease, and the separation of healthy children from

leprous parents at the earliest possible period. In supporting the reports of the Berlin and Bergen Conferences, Strasburg Congress considered that in countries with comparatively little leprosy patients should be treated in institutions or homes, but that where the disease prevailed to any appreciable extent, isolation is necessary. It should, however, be "humanely" effected and if possible in or near the patient's home, and combined with treatment. If public measures took away his means of livelihood from an interned leper, the public should consider his support and the support of his dependants to be a public obligation. At Cairo, where the Congress, under royal patronage, was opened by King Farouk in person, the medical committee recommended compulsory isolation of any case considered a special menace to public health, and considered home and village isolation to be very poor substitutes for institutional care. The removal at birth of infants from infective parents was also advocated. At the fifth and latest International Conference, held at Havana in April 1948, on the invitation of the Cuban Government, thirty-three countries were represented by 169 delegates, a large proportion from South America where the prevalence of the disease over large areas presents a serious problem. Dr Robert Cochrane's paper on "A comparison of the Sulphone Preparations with Hydnocarpus Therapy," gave rise to intensive discussion, a strong feeling being shown in favour of substitution of the new sulpha drugs for the chaulmoogra oil treatment commonly used at present. Another interesting debate centred round the continuance or otherwise of the words "leper" and "leprosy," against the use of which an agitation has arisen in recent years amongst

the inmates of some homes, the medical profession, and others interested. The report on "Social Assistance," urging Government and voluntary organisations to do more than ever to help victims of the disease was unanimously adopted, a gesture which will go far to hearten all already engaged in the fight, especially those holding the fort in lonely outposts.

The home of leprosy is not the great city, but the country district where overcrowding, poverty, and insanitary conditions provide favourable and prolific breeding-grounds for the growth of the bacilli. If the germ can be strangled in these strategic centres, the eradication of the disease from any country would be well within sight. For workers in isolated spheres, the loneliness and seeming hopelessness of early days has to an appreciable extent been banished. They are no longer solitary combatants but important units rendering invaluable service which is more and more being recognised and appreciated.

"One might as well try to rid India of its snakes as its lepers," was the pessimistic pronouncement of one Viceroy. Against this can be placed the optimistic outlook and assurance of another Governor, "The leper problem *can* be grappled with," and the fact that the disease has been eradicated from other countries under much less favourable conditions gives encouragement for continuance in the long and elusive struggle. The solution of the problem does not lie in tackling India's, China's, and Africa's hundreds of thousands of sufferers in one gigantic effort but in developing, little by little, the work being already so successfully carried on, until these and other lands are, one by one, added to the "cleansed" list.

Nothing has been more heartening in recent years

than the increased co-operation of the lepers themselves. In centres where fear and suspicion lurked in early days, applicants are crowding into the homes in numbers far beyond the accommodation at present available. At some centres lists of applicants are kept, but one superintendent reported that when he had recorded the seven hundredth name he decided to go no further as it was not a "pleasant" thing to have such a list lying around. A Government report on "Leprosy and its Control in India" (1941), states that "twenty years ago, practically every home in India had some spare accommodation. Now, in spite of the increase in the number of institutions and the extra accommodation provided at existing centres, homes are full to overflowing and thousands of applicants have to be turned away each year."

All leper homes have sprung from very small beginnings; the development of many reads like romance. At an Indian centre a newly-arrived missionary was visited by two leper-beggars pleading for food; with them he gladly shared his simple meal. To-day, accommodation for six hundred in a model home there is quite inadequate to meet the demands made upon it, sixty-five newcomers recently presenting themselves for the filling of ten vacancies. The faces of the younger members of the group were filled with eager expectancy; resignation and hopelessness looked out from the eyes of the older sufferers who had already been turned away time after time from overcrowded institutions and had long ceased to look for any door on earth being opened to them. From a medical point of view, every day counted for the young folk in the early stages of the disease. They knew this only too well, and they also knew that the Superintendent

realised the situation just as clearly as they did. Tense silence prevailed as he passed round and round the group, finding it almost impossible to make a selection, and even more difficult to make his choice known, for old and young alike were in desperate need of anything that could be done for them. At last he pointed to six young and four older sufferers, who rose to join the happy fellowship of the hundreds of others similarly afflicted within the shelter of the home. For a long time the remaining fifty-five sat with bowed heads, and then, one by one, slowly and silently took their departure. Such a scene is being repeated on a smaller scale at many a leper home to-day, but its remembrance and the need of those who have had to be refused linger for long in the minds of those who have had any share in the drama, and touch every compassionate heart.

The origin of the Itu leper colony in Nigeria, described as a "Christian triumph," is traced to the appearance of a solitary leper one morning at the Church of Scotland hospital dispensary. He had to be told that there was no medicine in hand for his disease but that if he came back in three months' time this might be available. In due course the drug arrived, but, alas! there was no return of the patient. Later in the year another man appeared and the drug which had lain aside for months was put into immediate use. Within half a year four hundred lepers had made temporary homes of palm branches for themselves on a sandbank in the middle of the Cross River. When the rainy season arrived the sandbank seemed likely to disappear and a more permanent site became necessary. Ground was at first refused by the local Chiefs, but the matter was taken in hand by the women

of the village who substantiated their appeal by sitting all night round the Head Chief's house until, as in the case of the importunate widow of New Testament days, he was "weary" of their petitions and their persistence, and was glad to get rid of them by granting a small piece of land on which the sufferers quickly erected huts and took up residence. To-day, the inmates of Itu leper "towns" number over 4,000, and the magnificent work goes forward from strength to strength under the superintendence and devoted care of its founder—Dr A. B. Macdonald.

Devastated by war, both internal and external, China cannot report progress comparable to other lands in dealing with its leper problem, either in the number of its homes or in the ratio of those being cared for, but effective work (mainly by missionary societies) has been carried on through all the turmoil, and advances being contemplated at many centres at present give promise of great development in future.

In 1894 the first Protestant refuge for the lepers of Japan was opened by the Mission to Lepers. The success of this effort did much to induce the Government to tackle the problem, and prior to the outbreak of the second world war, five large model Government refuges in different provinces were an indication of Japan's determination to fight the scourge. There is no doubt that the prospects for the eradication of leprosy from Japan are full of hope, although the world disaster has retarded progress meantime.

The first home for lepers in Korea was erected at Fusan by the Mission to Lepers in co-operation with the American Presbyterian Mission in 1910, and in no country has the work been more richly blessed. With the entry of Japan into the war, mission work in

Korea had to be abandoned and the home at Fusan closed on account of its strategic situation. The increased interest of the authorities, however, gives good reason for the hope that much greater prominence will be given to this subject in coming days.

In practically every country, missionaries have been the pioneers in leper work, but the problem can never be solved by their efforts alone, nor is it their task to assume the responsibilities of Government and local authorities in this matter. In attacking leprosy, however, it has been abundantly proved that the best team is the close partnership between Government officials and missionaries. Legislation in itself will never gain the victory, soften the cruel blow, or kill the despair of a leper's lot. It can enforce compulsory segregation, but in attempting to do so may even defeat its purpose by those affected concealing the presence of the disease or seeking shelter in pastures new, to which they carry infection. Government efficiency and control, backed by the "something extra"—love, care, and the gospel message—just make all the difference. No religion but the religion of Christ has a place or hope for the despised leper, and some of the finest leper homes and colonies in the world to-day are those erected or financed to a large extent by Government, with their superintendence in the hands of Christian missionaries. High Government officials have made generous acknowledgment of all that the co-operation of missionaries has meant to them in dealing with the problem in their districts. Eleven Governors of Bihar Province (India) in turn have testified to the splendid work of the Purulia home with its upwards of 800 inmates, carried on under missionary superintendence.

Many a missionary doctor has said that if medical care was all that he could give to the leper he would consider his work very ineffective. Injections of happiness and hope for mental and spiritual renewal are equally necessary with those of the healing oils if the cure is to be complete.

In all the Government homes in Japan permission was willingly granted for Christian instruction to be given by missionaries, and the result was a transformation in the lives of hundreds of inmates to whom their own religion offered no hope in life or death.

“ As the tree falls,
So let it lie ;
As the leper lives,
So let him die,”

was all that Buddhism could say to them.

Undreamt of possibilities brighten the future prospects of children stricken with the disease, the healthy children of leper parents, and even of older folks where the malady is taken in time. In the dispensaries and hospitals of many a leper home are to be found those who may later qualify as hospital assistants, nurses, or even doctors ; in the schools some are putting their feet on the first rung of the educational ladder which may lead to a university career ; in the Sunday Schools and Church services, future bible-women and catechists—it may be ordained pastors—are drinking in the Gospel message to be carried far and wide when the day comes for their release. Practically every walk of life is being entered upon and enriched by those who in former days would have been in their own words “ thrown on the dust-heap.”

While too much stress cannot be laid on the future outlook as regards the medical treatment, those for

whom there is no hope from a physical point of view must never be overlooked. In many cases the disease has completed its fell work, "burnt" itself out, leaving the body a mere shell and the wretched victim absolutely helpless. More than ever, these derelicts of humanity need love, help, and spiritual comfort right to the end of life's journey, and such service is surely one of the finest as it is one of the most exacting bits of work in the world.

Something of the physical effects of the cruel disease and of what the little "extra" may mean is pictured by a poet inmate of a Government leper home in Japan :—

" My hands are numb and broken,
I am blind ;
No longer can I see or touch
My little pot of violets ;
So I bend to kiss the wee, sweet flowers
Which mean so much to me."

" And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three ;
but the greatest of these is charity."

The call to engage in leper service does not appeal to all missionaries, but labour in this vineyard often brings a rich reward. Sometimes the call comes in a very unexpected way. On the last night of a year, more than half a century ago a missionary in Calcutta, reviewing his life-work, prayed that with the dawning of the coming year, God would set before him some new form of service. As if to emphasise the sincerity of his request and his whole-hearted consecration, the petitioner further asked that the task might be a "difficult" one. In his own words, with almost the "clearness of a voice from Heaven," the command came, "Go to the lepers." The call was unhesitatingly

and promptly obeyed, and after years of devoted labour which tried body and soul to their utmost the worker wrote, "I can truly say that some of the happiest moments of my life have been spent in ministering to these sufferers, and many a time have I blessed God that He ever led me to engage in so hallowed a work."

Even the most intrepid enthusiast, however, must falter on the threshold of such service. Robert Louis Stevenson records that on his visit to the Molokai home in the Hawaiian Islands, as the boat neared the shore, lepers in every stage of the loathsome disease, "every fourth face a blot upon the landscape," were to be seen on the landing-stage. In the little company were two nursing sisters, "bidding farewell to the lights and joys of human life"; one of them, quite overpowered, was weeping silently. Stevenson, greatly moved, could not refrain from mingling his tears with hers, and gently touching her he whispered, "Christ Himself goes before you to bid you welcome," surely a strengthening and comforting promise for the trying days and difficult work ahead.

1st century—The Master's command :

"Cleanse the lepers."

20th century—His followers' reply :

"The lepers are being cleansed,"

and the promise all down the centuries, and for every century to come, is the same :—

"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end
of the world."

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